DOCTOR STRANGE
12¢ IND.
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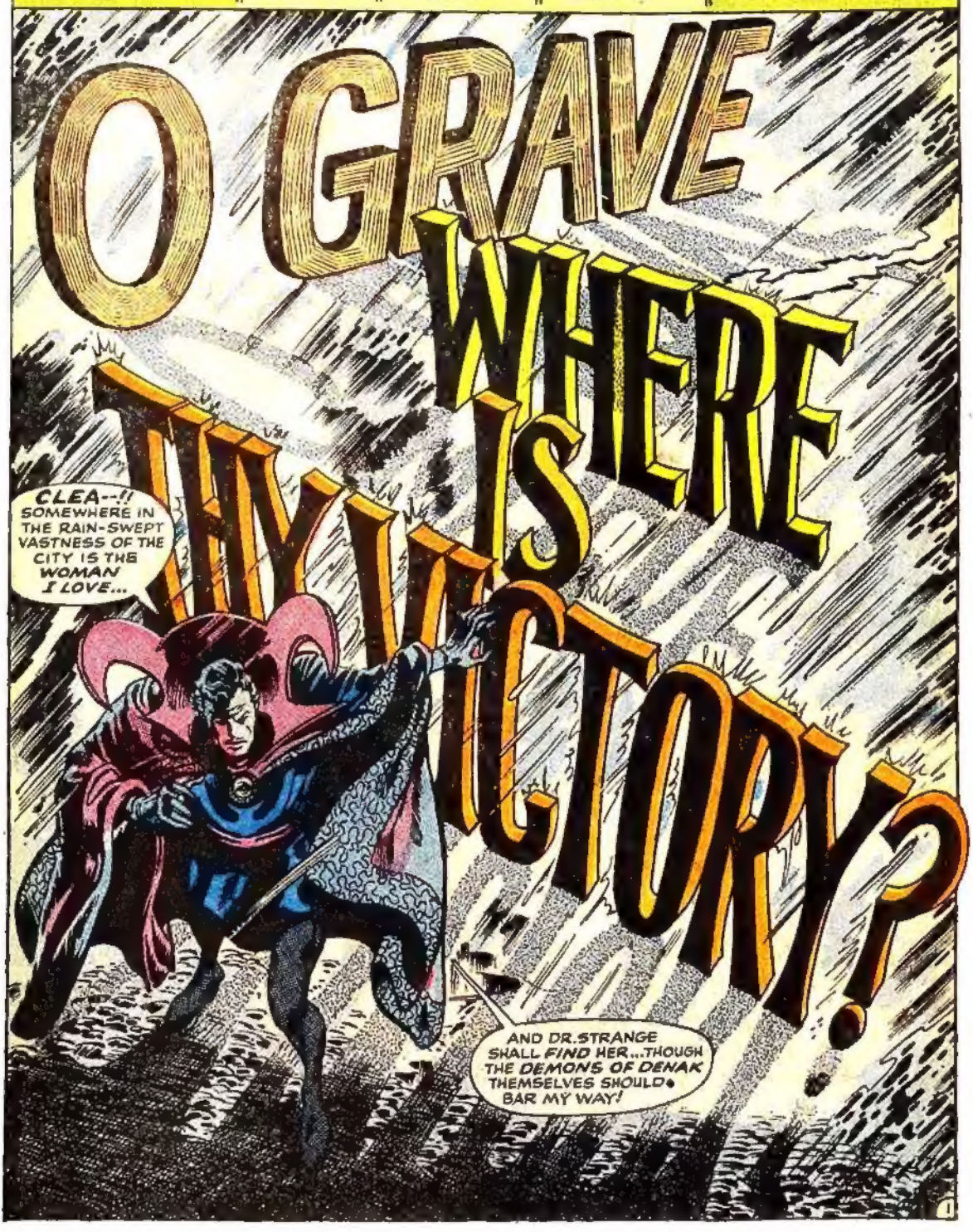
DR. STRANGE
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
STEPHEN STRANGE
BORN
DIED
OCTOBER
1968

A MASTERWORK OF MYSTICISM IN THE MODERN *MARVEL* MANNER, BY: | STAN LEE, EDITOR | ROY THOMAS, WRITER | GENE COLAN, ARTIST | WITH THE SUPPLEMENTARY SKILLS OF: *TOM PALMER*, INKER, AND *HERB COOPER*, LETTERER!


O GRAVE WHERE IS THY VICTORY?
CLEA--!! SOMEWHERE IN THE RAIN-SWEPT VASTNESS OF THE CITY IS THE WOMAN I LOVE...
AND DR. STRANGE SHALL *FIND* HER...THOUGH THE *DEMONS OF DENAK* THEMSELVES SHOULD BAR MY WAY!

"IF ONLY I KNEW WHAT HAD BEFALLEN HER...SINCE SHE MYSTERIOUSLY LEFT THE SAFETY OF HER APARTMENT..."
HERE'S A COUPLE'A LIKELY PROSPECTS...OUT FOR A GOOD MUGGING!
RUSH 'EM!
FLEE, MISS CLEA!
FLEE, WHILE WONG DOES WHAT HE CAN TO DELAY THESE FELONS!
NO, FAITHFUL ONE...NOT WHILE I POSSESS YET ONE IOTA OF MYSTIC MIGHT!
A SPELL OF TEMPORAL VANISHMENT WILL DISPOSE OF THE NEAREST OF MY ATTACKERS...!
BUT, THAT EXHAUSTED WHAT REMAINED OF MY OCCULT POWERS!
AND SOMEHOW ...WONG HAS DISAPPEARED AS WELL!
HAVE NO CHOICE NOW...BUT TO FLEE!
THIS ALLEYWAY... MY ONLY HOPE!
YET, THEY WILL SURELY SEE ME...AND FOLLOW ME, UNTIL--
OHHHHH...! WHO--?
YOUR PROTECTOR, FAIR CLEA...WHOSE MAGIC SHALL SHIELD YOU FROM PURSUING EYES!
MY MYSTIC NAME IS ASMODEUS, BUT YOU MAY CALL ME... FRIEND--!

...YET, THERE IS NO WAY I CAN LEARN WHAT TRANSPIRED HERE!
FOR, SOME DEVILISH SPELL HAS BEEN RECENTLY CAST, WHICH COVERS ALL TRACES OF MY VANISHED BELOVED!
A SIMPLE MYSTIC PASS WILL SCREEN ME FROM THE PELTING RAIN!
WOULD THAT I COULD FIND CLEA AS EASILY!
BUT, THAT WAY LIES MADDENING DESPAIR!
IT IS DEEDS THAT NOW WILL TELL...NOT MERE WORDS!
AND, I THINK I KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN...!
SNAP!
...WITH THE CAB-DRIVER ACROSS THE STREET!
THE SELFSAME MAN WHO MUST HAVE BROUGHT MY ENEMIES TO THIS ADDRESS!
IN THEIR CONFIDENCE, THEY DID NOT BOTHER TO DISPOSE OF HIM!
THERE HE SITS... ADRIFT IN A DREAM-LIKE TRANCE!
WITHIN HIS SLEEPING MIND, THE IDENTITIES OF MY FOES MAY YET LURK!
IF THEY DO ...I SHALL HAVE THEM OUT!!

HE DOESN'T RESPOND TO THE USUAL METHODS OF AWAKENING ONE WHO HAS BEEN HYPNOTIZED!
THEN, IT IS AS I SUSPECTED ...HIS TRANCE WAS MAGICALLY INDUCED!
SNAP! SNAP!
BUT, THERE ARE OTHER WAYS!
MAY THE IMAGES OF IKONN DISPEL THE HAZE WHICH SURROUNDS THEE...
MAY THE OMNIPOTENT OSHTUR RESTORE THEE TO THE LAND OF THE LIVING!
AH...HE BEGINS TO AWAKEN!
WHERE AM I? IS THIS THE BRONX?
WAITAMINNIT! I REMEMBER YOU, PAL...
YOU AND THE SILVER-HAIRED GIRL...THE ONE THEY ASKED ABOUT!
THEY, MY FRIEND?
FORGIVE MY ABRUPTNESS ...MY SEEMING IMPATIENCE ...BUT--
WHO ARE "THEY"?
THREE GUYS... ONE OF 'EM CALLED 'IMSELF WONG!
THEY ASKED ME WHERE I DROPPED OFF YOU AN' THE LADY... I TOLD 'EM THAT WUZ MY BUSINESS...
...AN' THAT'S THE LAST THING I REMEMBER!
OH YEAH ...EXCEPT FOR ONE THING!
I HEARD ONE OF 'EM MENTION A GROUP CALLED...THE SONS OF THE SPANISH, OR SOMETHIN'!
HEY... WHERE YA RUSHIN' OFF TO, MAC...?
FUNNY... I'D SWEAR THE RAIN WUZN'T EVEN HITTIN' THAT JOE!
HERMAN, YOU BEEN HACKIN' TOO LONG!

THE RAIN HAS STOPPED NOW...ITS STACCATO DRUMMING AGAINST STONE AND CONCRETE FADED INTO NOTHINGNESS...
BUT STILL, THRU THE STRANGELY SILENT CITY THERE STALKS...THE SEARCHER!
AT LEAST, NOW I KNOW HOW THEY LURED CLEA FROM HER HAVEN...
...BY DISGUISING ONE OF THEIR NUMBER AS WONG...WHOM SHE TRUSTED!
MUST FIND THEM... I MUST, BEFORE--
WAIT! THE AMULET ABOUT MY THROAT BEGINS TO PULSATE!
BUT, IT WOULD NEVER DO SO...WITHOUT CAUSE!
AND DR. STRANGE SHALL SOON KNOW WHAT THAT CAUSE IS!
LET THE AWESOME EYE OF AGAMOTTO BE AS ONE WITH ITS WEARER...
...THAT ITS SACRED LIGHT MAY ILLUMINE THE SKULKING EVIL WHICH CLOAKS ITSELF IN DARKNESS..!
THERE...IN THE MURKY SHADOWS ...THE VERY MEN THE DRIVER DESCRIBED!
HE'S SEEN US--WITH THAT THIRD EYE ON HIS FOREHEAD!
FURTHER STEALTH WILL AVAIL US NOTHING!
NAUGHT WILL AVAIL YOU ANYTHING, EVIL ONES, UNLESS YOU TELL ME AT ONCE--
WHERE IS CLEA??
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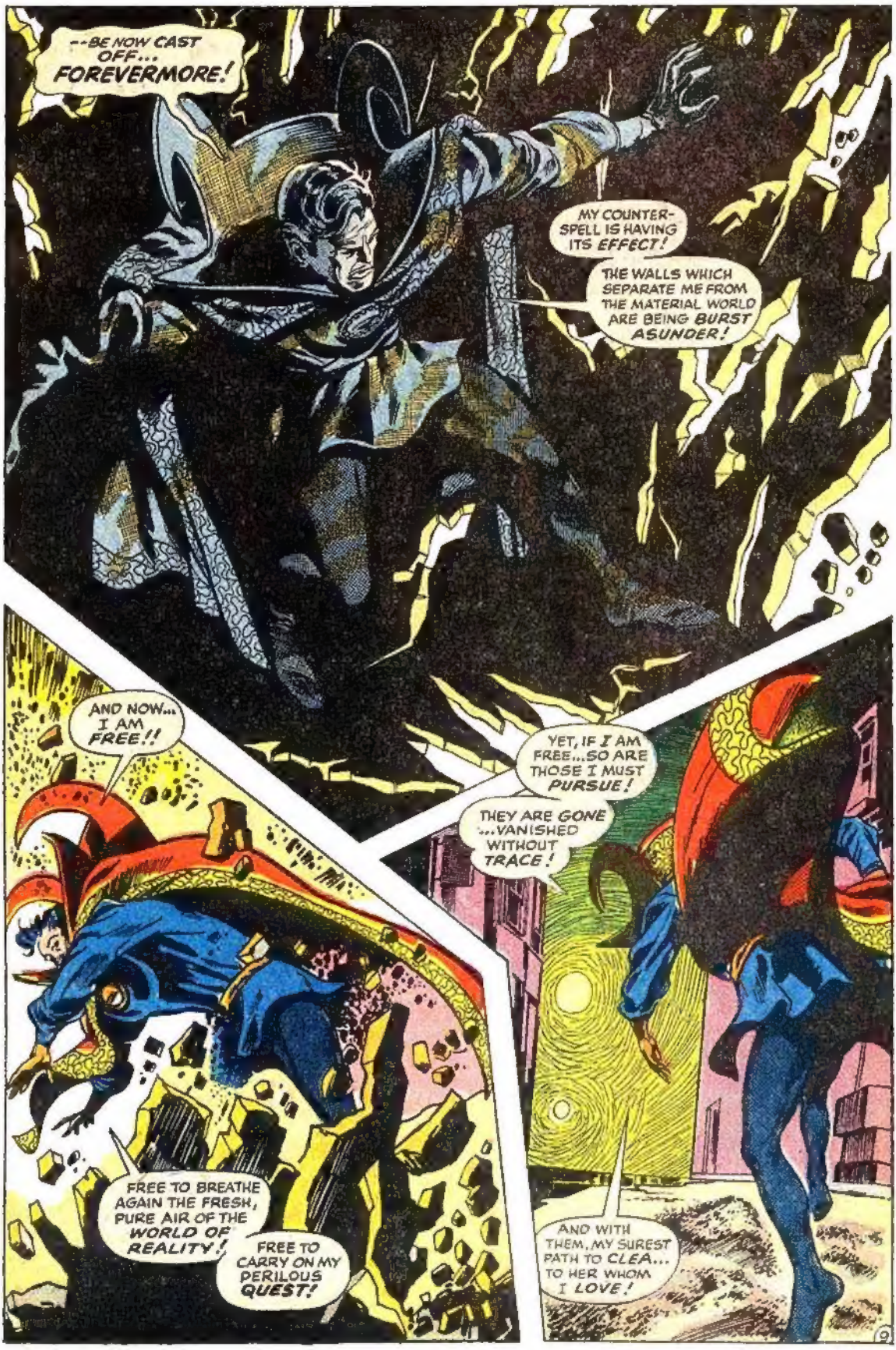
SO...YOU STAND MUTE ...REFUSE TO ANSWER!
PERHAPS YOUR TONGUES WILL BE FREER...
...WHEN YOU STAND REVEALED FOR THE LOATHSOME, LEERING ENTITIES WHICH YOU TRULY ARE...
...YOU WHO CALL YOURSELVES... THE SONS OF SATANNISH!!
OUR OUTER MASKINGS HAVE FALLEN AWAY...!
HELP US, O ASMODEUS... HELP US!
WE ARE BUT THREE--THREE AGAINST HIM WHO IS JUSTLY CALLED MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS...!

CEASE YOUR WHIMPERINGS, CRAVEN COWARDS!
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN OUR WONDROUS WANDS?
WANDS WHICH WERE CREATED TO DISPENSE THE COMBINED MIGHT OF ALL THE SONS OF SATANNISH?
BY THE MOONS OF MUNNOPOR!
MUST RAISE A MAGICAL DEFENSE, BEFORE--
THERE IS NO DEFENSE, FOOL...AGAINST THE RELENTLESS RIBBONS OF NIHILITY!
BEING BOMBARDED ...BY SPELLS SUCH AS NONE HAS EVER SEEN!
WHAT... IS HAPPENING ...TO ME...?
WAIT... NOW I SEE... THE BANDS OF UNHOLY LIGHT ARE WIDENING WITH EACH MOMENT...
BUT, BETWEEN THE BANDS... IS CUT A SINISTER SWATH OF NOTHINGNESS!
AND HERE...IN THE EVER-EXPANDING VOID...AM I...

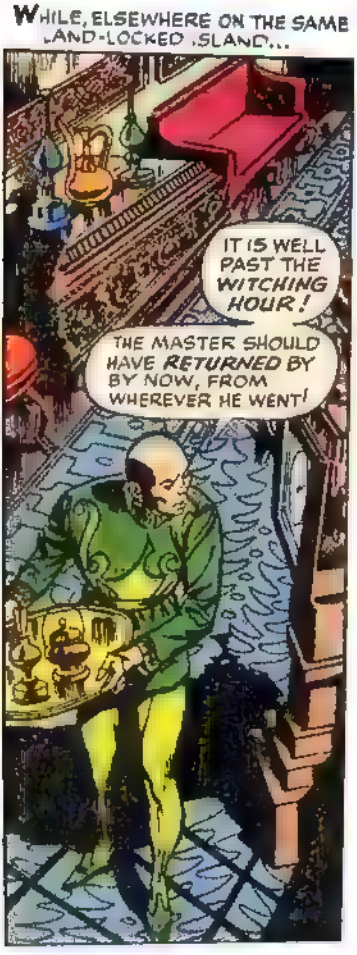
IT IS DONE!
THERE... WITHIN THAT CUBE OF NOTHINGNESS... IS DR. STRANGE!
AND THERE HE SHALL STAY... TILL ETERNITY IS BUT A MEMORY!
BUT NOW, IT'S TIME TO RETURN TO OUR SUBTERRANEAN LAIR!
EXALTED ASMODEUS WILL WANT TO KNOW OF OUR SUCCESS...
...A SUCCESS WHICH SHALL LEAD TO OTHERS FOR THE SONS OF SATANNISH!
YOU SPEAK WISELY, MARDUK!
LET US DEPART!
AND THEN, IN A SINGLE, SEARING FLASH OF LIGHT ...THEY ARE GONE...!
...WHILE, IN A PITCH-DARK WORLD OF NON-BEING... A PLACE WHICH IS NOT A PLACE...
UNLESS I MYSELF CAN BREAK FREE, I'M FOREVER DOOMED!
NO ONE ELSE COULD EVEN SEE THIS ACCURSED CUBE... MUCH LESS RESCUE ME!
YET, ALL IS NOT LOST!
BY THE SEVEN RINGS OF RAGGADORR... BY THE DOZEN MOONS OF MUNNDPOR... MAY THE BONDS THAT NOW BESET ME SORE--

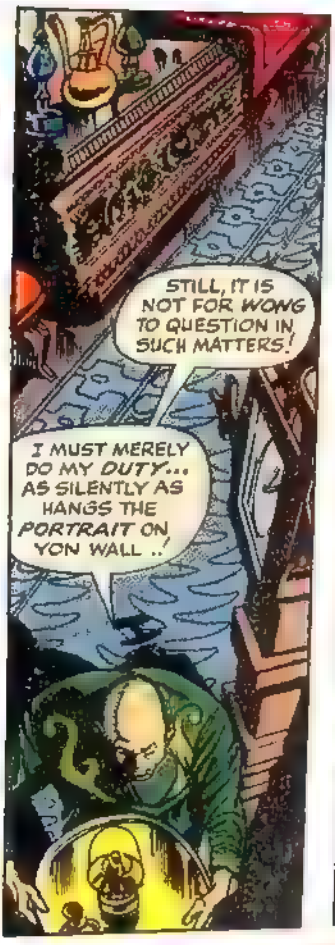

--BE NOW CAST OFF... FOREVERMORE!
MY COUNTER-SPELL IS HAVING ITS EFFECT!
THE WALLS WHICH SEPARATE ME FROM THE MATERIAL WORLD ARE BEING BURST ASUNDER!
AND NOW... I AM FREE!!
FREE TO BREATHE AGAIN THE FRESH, PURE AIR OF THE WORLD OF REALITY!
FREE TO CARRY ON MY PERILOUS QUEST!
YET, IF I AM FREE...SO ARE THOSE I MUST PURSUE!
THEY ARE GONE ...VANISHED WITHOUT TRACE!
AND WITH THEM, MY SUREST PATH TO CLEA... TO HER WHOM I LOVE!

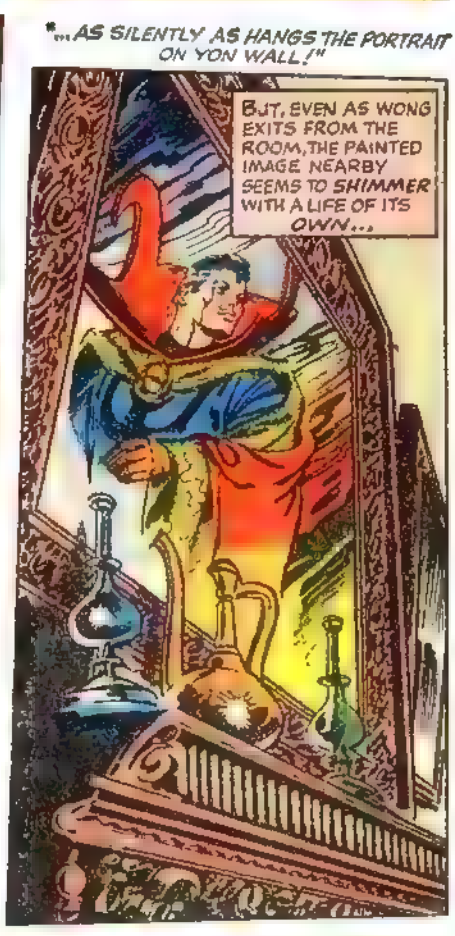
THUS, THE SEARCH BEGINS ANEW...THE QUEST THAT CAN END ONLY IN VICTORY...OR IN UTTER ANNIHILATION--!
THIS PSYCHIC SHIELD WILL HIDE ME FROM ALL HUMAN EYES WHICH MAY GAZE SKYWARD!
YET, MY FACELESS FOES ARE MORE THAN MERELY HUMAN!
THEY...WAIT! THAT SOUND... AS OF A THUNDER FROM SOME FAR-OFF COSMOS..!
LISTEN WELL TO THAT SEPULCHRAL SOUND, DR. STRANGE!
FOR, IT TOLLS YOUR DEATH-KNELL...AND THAT OF THE HUMAN RACE!
AND, NOW THAT WE HAVE TAKEN THE BAIT, AS YOU SAY, WE SHALL LIKEWISE TAKE...YOUR LIFE!
THE SONS OF SATANNISH HAVE TAKEN THE BAIT!
AND--ITS MAMMOTH WEIGHT IS MAKING ME FALL!
BEFORE I COULD ACT...MY PSYCHIC SPHERE IS ENCRUSTED WITH SOME MASSIVE MYSTIC FORCE!

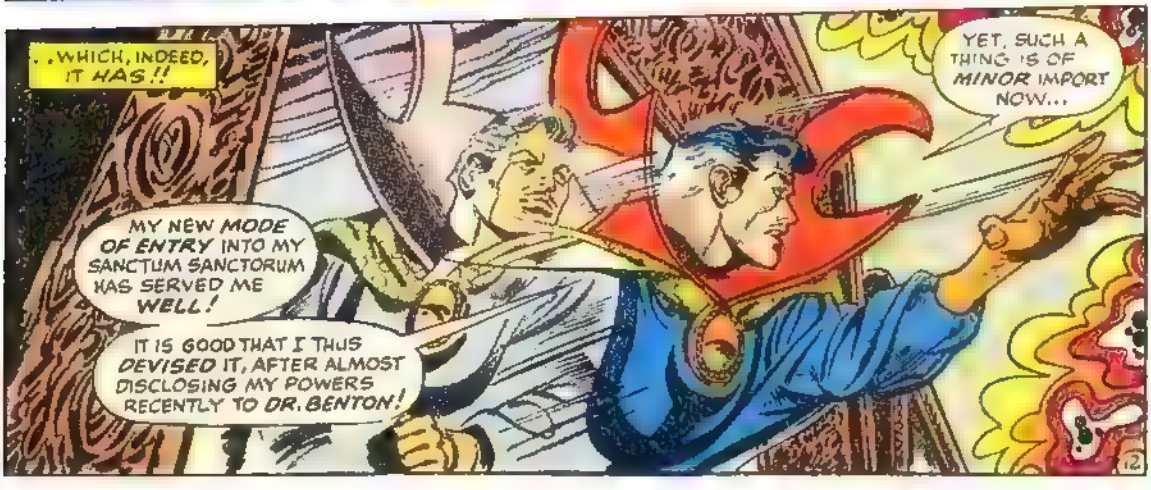
"...PLUMMET DOWNWARD... THE VERY AIR ABOUT THE HURTLING SPHEROID GIVING WAY BEFORE IT WITH AN EERIE SHRIEK..."
"...AS, BENEATH ME, THE MILLING THRONGS PAUSE TO LOOK UP IN FRENZIED FEAR...IN STARK TERROR..."
SKREEEEEEEEE
GOOD LORD! THAT... THAT THING--
IT'LL KILL US ALL!
EEEEEEEEE
DO SOMETHING TO STOP IT... ANYTHING!!
HOWEVER, THERE IS NOTHING THAT ANYONE CAN DO... UNTIL SUDDENLY, THE FALLING GLOBE ITSELF SEEMS TO EXPLODE IN A SCINTILLA OF BLAZING LIGHT AND COLOR...
AND, AT THAT SELFSAME MOMENT, SEVERAL SPECTATORS WILL LATER CLAIM THAT THEY SAW A MAN-SHAPED WRAITH PROPEL ITSELF OUTWARD AND UPWARD, TO VANISH IN THE ENSHROUDING NIGHT...
BUT, OF COURSE, THEY WILL NEVER KNOW... FOR CERTAIN...!

WH...WHAT WAS THAT??
IT WAS ROUND... AND .T GLOWED!
A FLYING SAUCER!
ALRIGHT, BREAK IT UP THERE!
DIDN'T ANY OF YOU EVER SEE A WEATHER BALLOON BEFORE...?


WHILE, ELSEWHERE ON THE SAME LAND-LOCKED ISLAND...
IT IS WELL PAST THE WITCHING HOUR!
THE MASTER SHOULD HAVE RETURNED BY BY NOW, FROM WHEREVER HE WENT!


STILL, IT IS NOT FOR WONG TO QUESTION IN SUCH MATTERS!
I MUST MERELY DO MY DUTY... AS SILENTLY AS HANGS THE PORTRAIT ON YON WALL..!


"...AS SILENTLY AS HANGS THE PORTRAIT ON YON WALL!"
BUT, EVEN AS WONG EXITS FROM THE ROOM, THE PAINTED IMAGE NEARBY SEEMS TO SHIMMER WITH A LIFE OF ITS OWN...


..WHICH, INDEED, IT HAS!!
MY NEW MODE OF ENTRY INTO MY SANCTUM SANCTORUM HAS SERVED ME WELL!
IT IS GOOD THAT I THUS DEVISED IT, AFTER ALMOST DISCLOSING MY POWERS RECENTLY TO DR. BENTON!
YET, SUCH A THING IS OF MINOR IMPORT NOW...

...WHILE THE LIFE OF CLEA TOTTERS IN THE BALANCE!
FOR, NOTHING WILL BE GAINED BY DECEIVING MYSELF...
MY FOES ARE DESPERATE MEN...WHO HAVE TRADED THEIR SOULS FOR THE TASTE OF POWER UNTRAMMELED!
I MUST DELVE DEEPER...EVER MORE DEEPLY... INTO THE SACRED BOOK OF THE VISHANTI!
WILL THEY HOLD DEAR THE LIFE OF A GIRL, WHEN THEY HAVE BARTERED THEIR OWN?
PERHAPS WITHIN THESE PAGES I SHALL LEARN HOW TO COMBAT MY HIDDEN NEMESES!
IF NOT, MAY HEAVEN HELP CLEA...AND THE WORLD!
.. THE ONE CALLED ASMODEUS SAID ...HE WAS FRIEND TO ME!
THEN WHY THIS NUMBING, NAMELESS SENSE OF DREAD WITHIN MY HEART?
DO NOT LOOK SO FEARFUL, MY DEAR!
DO AS NOBLE ASMODEUS SUGGESTS, BEAUTEOUS ONE!
LOOK INTO THE GLIMMERING GLOBE BEFORE ME, AND VIEW THE GLORIOUS FATE THAT LIES IN STORE FOR YOU!
SOON, YOU SHALL STAND AGAIN AT THE SIDE OF YOUR BELOVED!
HE CAN ONLY MEAN... DR. STRANGE!
MUST TAKE THE CHANCE...DO WHAT HE SAYS! WHAT HAVE I... TO LOSE?

LOOK, GIRL OF THE NETHER REALMS!
GAZE UPON THE PULSATING MYSTIC ENERGY WHICH EMANATES FROM MY OUTSTRETCHED GRASP!
DOES IT NOT MAKE YOU YEARN, DREAMY-EYED, FOR THE FAR-FLUNG WORLDS YOU WERE WONT TO ROAM?
DOES IT NOT MAKE YOUR EYE-LIDS HEAVY...YOUR VERY BREATH COME MORE SLOWLY?
THEN LISTEN...HEAR AND HEED THE WORDS OF ASMODEUS..!
...LONG HOURS HAVE I SPENT THUS IN ARCANE STUDY!
BUT I DARE NOT OVERLOOK A CLUE, IF I AM TO RESCUE CLEA!
AND IF SHE NEED NO RESCUING, GOOD STEPHEN?
BUT, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
YOU VANISHED ...ABDUCTED BY IMPOSTORS!
RRRRING
I...ESCAPED!
YOUR TELEPHONE, MY LOVE..!
YOU--CLEA!
WHOEVER IT IS ...I'LL NOT BE LONG, FAIR ONE!
HELLO... DR. STRANGE?
THIS IS DR. BENTON...YOUR PERSISTENT EX-COLLEAGUE!
MAY THE DEATHLESS VISHANTI BE PRAISED!
YOU ARE SAFE!!
I TOLD YOU I'D KEEP HAUNTING YOU TILL YOU BE-CAME MY CONSULTANT ...AND I'M AS GOOD AS MY WORD!

I AM FLATTERED BY YOUR RENEWAL OF THE OFFER, DR BENTON!
BUT, I'VE TOLD YOU BEFORE...I'M NO LONGER A SURGEON!
NO, I'M SORRY, BUT MY DECISION...
...IS FIN--
CLEA!
OHH...THAT LIGHT! WHERE AM I..??
SHE WAS ABOUT TO STRIKE ME... WITH AN ORNAMENTAL SWORD!
ONLY MY OCCULT POWERS SAVED ME, BY REDUCING THE WEAPON TO NOTHINGNESS!
JUST AS I SUSPECTED! SHE WAS SENT HERE UNDER SOME SINISTER SPELL!
BUT, MY OWN BOLT'S BRILLIANCE HAS NEGATED ITS EFFECTS!
YET, IS THAT WHAT IS TRULY BEST?
NO! BY ALL THE DARKSOME DEMONS OF DENAK...
...LET CLEA REMAIN ENTRANCED, THAT SHE MAY TELL ME THAT WHICH I WOULD KNOW!
YOU...HAVE BUT TO ASK... O MASTER...!
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THUS, LET THE AWESOME IMAGES NOW FORM...
...THAT THE HIDDEN EVIL MAY STAND REVEALED!
THEN, FEARSOME PHANTOM FACES FILL THE CHAMBER, AND A RECENTLY-SPOKEN COMMAND IS HEARD! "KILL DR STRANGE—AND BRING US THE BOOK OF THE VISHANTI—!"
DR. STRANGE? HELLO? HELLO?
THE LINE'S GONE DEAD!
DID HE MERELY HANG UP ON ME, OR--??
...SHE GOES HER WAY LIKE A SLEEP-WALKER!
AND EVER BEFORE HER SHE SUSPENDS... THE BOOK!
YES... THE BOOK... THE BOOK!
...MUST TAKE IT TO THE SONS OF SATANNISH...THEY WHO ARE MY ONLY FRIENDS IN THIS HOSTILE COSMOS..!
THRU THE NIGHT... THRU COOL AUTUMN MISTS AND SWIRLING FOG...GOES THE SILVER-HAIRED GIRL, UNTIL SHE COMES TO--
A CEMETERY!
IS THIS THE STRONGHOLD OF THOSE SHE CALLS THE SONS OF SATANNISH?

FOR, EVEN AS I WATCH, SHE MAKES STRAIGHT FOR THAT MAUSOLEUM!
IT MUST BE SO! THAT IS THE ONLY ANSWER!
WILL ITS MARBLE DOORS SLIDE OPEN ...TO RECEIVE THE WOMAN I LOVE?
SHE WALKS THRU THE DOOR...AS IF IT WERE NAUGHT SAVE A MIRAGE!
NO...THE TRUTH IS STRANGER STILL!
YET, ONLY A FEW HOURS AGO, CLEA SEEMED ON THE VERGE OF LOSING HER OCCULT POWERS! AND NOW--
BY THE HOARY HOSTS OF HOGGOTH!
BEFORE ME LOOMS A TOMBSTONE...NEWLY-CARVED...ICY COLD...
AND CARVED UPON IT IS...
...MY NAME!
STEPHEN STRANGE
DIED OCTOBER 1968

THEN, IT IS TIME THAT I ABANDON MY PHYSICAL FRAME FOR THE NONCE...
...AND LET MY ASTRAL FORM CARRY ON MY SEARCH!
SO! IT IS JUST AS I SUSPECTED!
THE MAUSOLEUM IN TRUTH HOUSES NOTHING...
NOTHING SAVE A STONE STAIRWAY, LEADING DOWN TOWARDS I-KNOW-NOT-WHAT!
DARK IS THIS CAVERNOUS CORRIDOR...DARK AS THE SOULS OF THE MEN I SEEK!
YET, THAT BLACKNESS IS NAUGHT COMPARED TO THE AIR OF ALL-PERVADING EVIL THAT CLOSES IN UPON ME!
WAIT...A LIGHT FLICKERS BEFORE ME...!
AND THERE, EMERGING FROM A PIT OF PHANTOM FIRE...!
SPEAK, GRAY DECEIVERS ...TELL ME WHO YOU ARE, OR FACE THE WRATH OF DR. STRANGE!
YOUR PUNY WRATH STRIKES NO FEAR, CLOWN, INTO THE HEARTS OF--
THE SONS OF SATANNISH!
SMITE HIM, O ADMODEUS... BEFORE HE CAN MAKE HIS ESCAPE!

HE SHALL NOT ESCAPE, FOOL...
HAS NOT OUR CONCERTED POWER CREATED THE GREATEST WEAPONS OF ALL?
HAVE WE NOT... THE CRYSTALS OF CONQUEST?
MAY OMNIPOTENT OSHTUR PRESERVE ME!
THE VERY ETHER SEEMS SUDDENLY FILLED WITH WRITHING, RENDING TENTACLES!
NOT MERE TENTACLES, MY DEAR DOCTOR...
DEADLY PSYCHIC GROWTHS THAT WILL CRUSH YOUR ASTRAL SELF--
--AS EASILY AS THEY WOULD DESTROY YOUR PHYSICAL BODY!
WAIT, O ADMODEUS... SOMETHING IS... HAPPENING..!
YES, YOU WHO CALL YOURSELVES THE SONS OF SATANNISH!
AN ARCANE GESTURE... AND THE TENDRILS FALL BEFORE THE FIERY FLAMES OF THE FALTINE!
YOU ARE NOT DEALING NOW WITH A WEAKENED, FRIGHTENED GIRL...

...BUT WITH THE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!!
AND NOW, WHILE YOUR WITS ARE YET SCATTERED--
LET A MAGICAL BOLT SMASH YOUR INFERNAL CRYSTAL!
YOU FORGET, MY FRIEND, THAT I SPOKE IN THE PLURAL!
TWIN SPELLS--
--EMANATING FROM A SECOND CRYSTAL!
LOOK!
HIS WRAITH-FORM HAS REJOINED...HIS APPROACHING PHYSICAL FORM!
NO TIME ...TO ERECT A DEFENS--
UNHHHH!
THEN, AS THE FALLEN SORCERER REGAINS HIS SENSES...
NOW YOU MAY STAND AT YOUR PRECIOUS CLEA'S SIDE, FOOL...
SINCE WE NOW POSSESS YOUR ENCHANTED CLOAK...AND VAUNTED AMULET!
WE ARE DOOMED.. DOOMED!
NEVER DISPAIR, CLEA...
WHILE LIFE EXISTS, CAN HOPE FALTER?
--WE HEREBY EXILE YOU TO A SAVAGE WORLD ...AND AN IGNOBLE DEATH...!
AND IF LIFE CEASES TO EXIST, HELPLESS ONE?
WITH THE BOOK OF THE VISHANTI IN OUR GRASP, WE HAVE NO FURTHER NEED OF YOU!
THUS, WITH A SPELL FROM THAT SELFSAME BOOK--
NEXT: "THE CULT AND THE CURSE!"
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